

# TAOS ZONE FIRE NEWS

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## **Spring and Summer Fun Still Possible in Northern New Mexico – With Some Restrictions**

Taos – Despite the many fire restrictions announced over the past two months across northern New Mexico due to the severity of the fire danger this year, many areas remain open to the public for spring and summer activities.

Seven federal, state and tribal agencies that manage lands within the ‘Taos Zone’ in the northern part of the state are working together to establish fire restrictions and inform the public about recreational opportunities. The Taos Zone borders the Navajo Reservation on the west and extends to the Texas state line in the east, and extends south to Espanola (see map last page).

As always, the public is asked to use caution when recreating on public lands and remember that the fire danger is high. Also, fireworks are not permitted on public lands.

### ***BLM and Forest Service Lands***

The Taos Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management has no closures or restrictions on public lands within the area (eastern Rio Arriba County, Santa Fe and Taos Counties, including lands along the Rio Chama and the Rio Grande).

However, BLM lands managed by the Farmington Field Office and the Forest Service’s Carson National Forest have been placed in Fire Restrictions.

### ***Areas of the Taos Zone under Stage 1 Fire Restrictions:***

BLM Farmington Field Office (*BLM public lands in San Juan County, and western Rio Arriba County*), and

U.S. Forest Service - Jicarilla Ranger District in Rio Arriba County.

*Stage 1 Fire Restrictions include the following:*

### **Open Campfire Restrictions**

Campfires, charcoal grills and stove fires are prohibited except in developed camp and picnic grounds where grills are provided.

### **Smoking Restrictions**

Smoking is allowed within enclosed vehicles or buildings, a developed recreation site or in an area at least 3 feet in diameter that is free of all flammable material.

## Fireworks

Fireworks are prohibited on federal lands. Violations are punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000 for an individual and/or imprisonment up to 6 months.

Pressurized liquid or gas stoves, lanterns and heaters are allowed on both Forest Service and BLM public lands.

### ***Areas of the Taos Zone under Stage II Fire Restrictions include:***

Carson National Forest (except for Jicarilla Ranger District)  
Kiowa/Rita Blanca National Grasslands

### ***Stage II Fire Restrictions prohibit the following:***

1. Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, campfire, charcoal or wood stove fire. (Pressurized liquid gas stoves, grills and lanterns meeting safety specifications are allowed.)
2. Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building
3. Possessing, discharging or using any kind of fireworks or other pyrotechnic device
4. Using an explosive
5. Operating a chainsaw or other equipment powered by an internal combustion engine
6. Operating or using any internal or external combustion engine without spark arrestors
7. Welding or operating acetylene or other torch with open flame
8. Possessing or using a motor vehicle off National Forest System Roads

### ***New Mexico State Forestry Division (State and Private Lands)***

The State Forestry Division enforces fire restrictions on private lands, State Parks and all other non-federal, non-tribal and non-municipal lands within the Taos Zone. Special fire restrictions have been issued for the Cimarron District in northeastern New Mexico, but not the Chama District in north-central New Mexico. State lands and parks in the Chama District and Navajo State Park remain open.

### ***Cimarron District Special Fire Restrictions***

Colfax, Union, Quay, and Mora Counties

Fire Restrictions are as follows:

1. Smoking is restricted to enclosed buildings or vehicles equipped with ashtrays on paved or surfaced roads, developed recreation sites or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable vegetation.
2. Fireworks are prohibited in all wildland areas.
3. Campfires are prohibited except where cooking or heating devices use kerosene, white gas or propane as a fuel in an improved camping area that is cleared of flammable vegetation at least 30 feet or has a water source. The State Forester allows exceptions for charcoal grills and wood and coal stoves within yards associated with a residence or on the premises of a business.
4. Open burning, i.e. burning of cropland, fields, rangeland, debris burning, slash piles, prescribed burning or weed burning are prohibited.

The State Forester can grant an exception to open burning when the following conditions are met:

- Cropland is irrigated
- Burning is done with adequate planning
- Adequate personnel to monitor and control burn
- Burn area is secured from becoming uncontrolled at the end of daily operations and
- Notification is provided by responsible person to local fire department responsible for fire protection and follows all local burning guidelines and 20.2.60.112 NMAC, Conditions for Restricted Open Burning.

5. Flaring of gas (gas wells) is prohibited.

The State Forester can grant an exception when:

- At least one adult is on site with communications equipment adequate to reach county dispatch and local fire department in the event of fire.
- Local fire department and county dispatch are notified at least 24 hours in advance of anticipated releases that will result in flaring.
- Unless flaring is needed for safety purposes, flaring pursuant to this exception shall not be done on days that are “red flag days.”

The State Forester may allow exemptions from some of the restrictions on a case-by-case basis upon receiving a written request and granting subsequent approval in writing. One may apply for an exemption on the Forestry Division website at [www.nmforestry.com](http://www.nmforestry.com)

***Tribal Lands***

The Northern Pueblos Agency of the Bureau of Indian Affairs reports that the Pueblos of Okay Owingeh, Picuris and Taos are restricted to tribal members only, except for fishing lakes at Okay Owingeh and Picuris, which will remain open to the public. The Jicarilla Agency reports that Jicarilla Apache tribal lands will remain open.

Be safe and enjoy the outdoors!

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